

VZCZCXRO4147
PP RUEHBC RUEHDE RUEHIHL RUEHKUK RUEHMOS
DE RUEHGB #0550 0521918
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
P 211918Z FEB 06
FM AMEMBASSY BAGHDAD
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 2831
INFO RUCNRAQ/IRAQ COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
RHEHNSC/WHITE HOUSE NSC WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L BAGHDAD 000550

SIPDIS

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 02/21/2026
TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [PNAT](#) [IZ](#)
SUBJECT: DEPUTY TNA SPEAKER SPECULATES ON FUTURE
PARLIAMENTARY LEADERSHIP AND REFORMS

Classified By: POLITICAL COUNSELOR ROBERT S. FORD, FOR REASONS 1.4 (B)
AND (D).

[¶1.](#) (C) In a February 16 meeting with Poloff, Deputy TNA Speaker Arif Taifour discussed the transition from the Transitional National Assembly to the Council of Representatives (CoR). He speculated that he or Fu'ad Ma'asum (leader of the Kurdish Alliance delegation in the TNA) would be a Deputy Speaker of the CoR. He added that Ma'asum would likely not accept the position since he had been Speaker of the Iraqi Interim National Council (IINC). He also thought Hussein al-Shahristani would remain as the other Deputy Speaker. As for the next speaker, he acknowledged that it would likely be a Sunni Arab and said he had heard Tariq al-Hashimi and Ayad al-Sammarai mentioned as possible candidates.

[¶2.](#) (C) Taifour agreed with the assessment that the Council of Representatives likely will have more responsibility under the new constitution than the TNA had under the Transitional Administrative Law (TAL). He expressed the hope that power within the CoR would be decentralized, with a formal division of labor so the Deputy Speakers could have more specific responsibilities and authorities than they had in the TNA. (Comment. In the TNA, the Speaker had much more control over the budget, staffing and day-to-day activities of the assembly. End Comment). He also said there needed to be more financial transparency of the TNA's own budget, with less centralized control in the Speaker's Office. He acknowledged the importance of having active committees and of having CoR members attend sessions regularly.

[¶3.](#) (C) Comment. Taifour's comments were an indirect, but not very subtle, criticism of the management style of the TNA Speaker Hajim al-Hasani. The TNA Speaker's office exercised control over the TNA's administration and budget, but the Speaker himself was frequently absent. It is unclear whether the parties will fight for the aforementioned CoR reforms when new by-laws are adopted. End Comment.
KHALILZAD